



**SECRETARY'S REPORT
FOR 1995/96**

The year has been a very successful one for the Society. Since the last AGM 30 new members have joined and one Institutional Member has rejoined. Membership now stands at 214 Ordinary, 74 Joint, 79 Institutional. Sadly the death of one member, Mrs E. Lock, has been reported, and the Society's sympathy and condolences are extended to her family and friends.

The Secretary's job is in fact shared among a number of people and once again, I will use my review to thank the various individuals that have helped to organise such an enjoyable programme of events during the year.

The field meetings are organised by Dr Ian Sutton and we are very fortunate to have someone who has such a wide knowledge of locations and leaders. Dr Sutton and his office also save Council a lot of work by maintaining the postal address list, printing the envelope labels and posting the circular. The field trips are the best opportunity for our amateur members to do some hands-on geology. I understand that very few other societies can turn out sufficient members to make coach hire viable. This is greatly preferable to the marshalling of large numbers of cars, so please keep coming on the field trips. If you haven't this year, you have missed some excellent excursions.

In April, Dr Dick Aldridge led 44 members on a trip to the Wenlock Edge area to visit two working quarries and other localities. In spite of rain all day, many interesting fossils were seen, some intriguing reef/sedimentary relationships were observed and debated and much was learnt about the practical aspects of quarrying in that area.

In May, Dr Tony Cooper of the BGS led 36 members to Knaresborough Gorge, where an unconformity was followed through 14 locations to demonstrate how the Upper Permian strata were draped over the eroded Carboniferous land surface. Several excellent sections of the Permian Cadeby Limestone Formation (formerly known as the Lower Magnesian Limestone) were examined, providing the opportunity for members to study the range of carbonate depositional environments preserved in these rocks.

In June, Dr Ian Sutton and Mr Albert Horton led the Nottingham City building stones walk, which was attended by 34 people and generated considerable interest from passing members of the public, not all of it desirable! Many useful contributions were made by members, particularly Dr Firman. The walk was a trial run for the written version, which will be included in the Society's Field Guide to the Geology of the East Midlands (see page 96). Also in June, Alan Dawn led an evening walk to the Ketton Quarry geological trail.

The trip to the Cotswolds in July (see *Mercian Geologist*, Volume 14, Part 1, pp. 34-37) was led by Mike Sumbler and Mark Barron, both of BGS. It was attended by around 30 members and reported as excellent with very good fossil hunting. The Norfolk weekend in September, led by Martin Warren and Dr Sutton, was attended by 29 members and was also reported as excellent and very enjoyable. As always, the extra contributions by BGS staff and other knowledgeable members have enhanced the trips.

The field visits require a subsidy but Council think this is worthwhile to encourage more members to take part. We welcome guests of members on field trips where numbers are not limited. For insurance purposes, guests are made members for the day at a cost of £2.00.

The indoor meetings are occasions when most of the membership can get together. The meetings for 1995/96 were organised by Dr Neil Aitkenhead. Again the Society is very fortunate to have someone with such a large number of contacts to be able to find suitable speakers and who has the experience to be able to guide lecturers into a format that is suitable for our wide-ranging audience. This year we have once again enjoyed a varied and balanced lecture programme. The first lecture of the 1995/96 season was by Dr David Baker on the geology of the Moon and the evidence it provides to help us understand the origin of the entire Earth-Moon system. Over 80 members attended, several members commenting that this was one of the most enjoyable lectures for a long time, as evidenced by an interesting session of numerous challenging questions for the speaker.

In November, Simon Parfait admirably stood in at very short notice for Mark Roberts, who was ill. The large lecture theatre had been booked, as a large attendance was expected for the topic of Boxgrove Man, very much in the news at the time. About 150 members and guests attended and the lecture was very well received but unfortunately there were sound and heating problems which will be attended to for future lectures at this venue.

Prior to our usual cheese and wine get-together in December, Dr Brian Taylor of BGS, who is well known to most members, gave us an amusing and informative lecture on the history of the concept of geological time. In January, Dr Tony Waltham returned to a packed theatre to lecture on Katmai and St Helens in his highly individual and engaging style. For the Foundation lecture in February we were lucky enough to have Professor Joe Cann to talk about black smokers on the deep ocean floor and the fascinating creatures that live around them. The talk was illustrated with some amazing slides taken from the ALVIN minisub. The lecture was followed by an excellent meal in the comfortable surroundings of the University Staff Club.

Joan Bush is responsible for producing the circular, without which there would be no publicity for Society events. Joan has the difficult task of

tactfully chasing speakers and excursion leaders for information and then collating it. There have been 6 circulars published this year.

There are many things to thank the President for but the one that I would like to mention here is for use of her office for photocopying the circular, minutes, agendas etc., thus saving the Society a great deal of time and money.

Your Council has met 6 times this year and continues to be conscious of its responsibilities in accordance with the Society's objectives of promoting interest in geology in the East Midlands by encouraging research, education and conservation. This year we continued with, or supported, several projects.

1. The EMGS Award Scheme is designed to increase the awareness of geology among 18 year old school leavers. It is a travel award of £250 for the winner and £50 for their School to be awarded to the best submission of a geological investigation proposal from a pre-undergraduate student in the East Midlands. With the assistance of members, the examining boards and the ESTA, we have refined our list of schools that are likely to have candidates, and have publicised the scheme through the ESTA and in all the relevant local papers and *Down to Earth*. Despite these efforts, however, I am disappointed to report that this year we have had no submissions and Council is therefore considering the future of the award. We made the award last year to Miss Katrena Stanhope of Skegness Grammar School, who produced a splendid report on her trip to Anglesey. She was also supported by the school. We would like to think that in a small way the Society may have helped her obtain three grade 'A' A Levels and a scholarship to Royal Holloway and New Bedford College of London University. She has written twice to say how well she is getting on and to thank the Society for its support.

2. The second initiative is the EMGS 'Field Guide to the Geology of the East Midlands', which is progressing steadily. The three 'city walks'-type excursions in the book will also be available separately as leaflets and published simultaneously. A lot of work is being done on this by Mr Horton, Dr Sutton and Dr Howard.

3. The Society has paid for the information and interpretation notices at the Ketton SSSI site. This project has been led by Alan Dawn with help from some of our members and members of the Stamford and District Geological Society. This year has seen the official opening of the much-praised site.

4. We have made our usual small financial contribution to help Derby Environmental Week, to be held in early 1996/97. As before, the Society will be represented at several events. Special thanks go to Philip Mucklow for dressing the Society's stand, which is also available for use at other events.

5. An ongoing initiative is the Nottingham Sandstone Caves booklet, an off-print of the original *Mercian Geologist* article. Thanks to the generosity of

the author, Tony Waltham and the energetic distribution team of Andrew and Judy Rigby, Judy Small and Dr Waltham, we have so far sold 3200 copies, generating a profit for the Society of over £3000. To build on the success of this booklet, Dr Waltham is rewriting it to make it more assessible to the lay reader and thus widen its appeal. The new version will be in a smaller format with a colour cover. Although there is now competition for sales in this area, we are confident that the new version will be a success both in terms of promoting the Society's objectives and providing a good financial return.

I have one final thank you to make on your behalf and that is to Nottingham University for providing us with excellent accommodation for our Council meetings and lectures. We are very lucky indeed to be able to use these facilities.

In conclusion I feel that the Society has had a very successful year and with the continuing and hopefully increased support of members, 1996/97 will be even better.

Alan Filmer

